

Emerson Skunks seek to expand community this season

Leo Kagan
Beacon Correspondent

As the fall semester kicks off and the temperature begins to mellow out, Emerson's ultimate frisbee team, the Skunks, reclaims its spot on the baseball field in the Boston Commons for another year of tossing around the disc.

The team—which has been at Emerson since 2016 and was officially recognized in 2019—has struggled to find games and tournaments to participate in over the last few seasons due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The height of the Skunks' success was in the 2019 season when they won the Division B Mixed College Regional Championship and placed second in the mixed division at the Lobster Pot Ultimate Tournament, one of the biggest ultimate tournaments in the northeast.

Over the last few years, however, between higher rates of team turnover and limited playing time, the Skunks have enjoyed less success on the field. Despite that, they've committed to improving things off



Courtesy Elaina Bolanos

the field. The team, enjoying the sun shining on the Commons before their first get-together on Friday, acknowledged they changed how they choose their leaders last semester.

"We amended our constitution to increase the number of roles on the E-board," team president Truman Segal said. "[We want] to divide things in a more equitable way and to make roles democratic instead of appointed."

The Skunks hope to expand their team, which has been growing steadily larger over the last several years.

"My freshman year, our team had a maximum of 30 people, maybe less," said co-captain Jamie Leuchs-Curtis. "Last year, we had about 45 people on the team. This year, we're expecting closer to 50."

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'I can't comprehend how much money I'm paying': Students react to tuition raise for academic year

Olivia LeDuc
Beacon Correspondent

When Emerson announced it was raising tuition for the 2022-23 academic year, sophomore visual media arts major Elle Mako wondered how she would pay for it. Between the increase and the yen depreciation in her home country, Japan, her bill rose by approximately \$12,000.

Emerson announced a rise in tuition and room and board costs by 2% for the 2022-23 academic year in a campus-wide email sent in March. Interim President William Gilligan and Chairman of the Board Eric Alexander attributed the increase to "challenges imposed by the pandemic."

The announcement wasn't the first of its kind—Emerson raised the cost of attendance by 2% in the 2021-22 year, by 3.5% in the 2020-21 year, and by varying percentages, every year preceding that since 2012.

While Emerson offers financial assistance opportunities, like the Tuition Increase Offset Fund and need and merit-based scholarships, Mako is faced with a harsh reality—college is too expensive.

"I'm going to start [working] a part-time job, and I'm planning to leave school earlier because I can't afford it," she said.

With the fall semester in full swing, Mako and other students are starting to feel the effects of the tuition increase.

"I feel like the tuition raise is quite steep considering the cost of tuition at Emerson already," said Fiona McMahon, a sophomore VMA major.

Tuition for the 2022-23 academic year costs \$52,288, according to an Emerson College webpage. Because of Emerson's price tag, McMahon faces costly debt, particularly as tuition increases.

"I've had to do a lot of financial

student body, pg. 3

'One smile at a time': Beloved Emerson figure Victor Choi opens sushi restaurant



Courtesy Adrianna Pray

Tea Perez
Beacon Staff

Nestled between the Emerson Dining Center and Piano Row sits a brand new sushi restaurant, Pick N' Roll Sushi, owned and operated by renowned itamae Victor Choi.

Choi, an experienced sushi chef, worked at Emerson's Lion's Den for 4 years before branching out to Pick N' Roll Sushi. With the announcement of the opening, Emerson Today reported the location would accept ECCash and Board Bucks.

"The main reason we wanted to open a new store was that I was only selling to the students and as a business owner, I'm always trying to grow my business," Choi said. "When I saw the lease become available for this location, I had to take the chance and just go for it."

The proximity to the Emerson campus was a deliberate decision on Choi's part, wanting to stay close to the community that has supported him over the years.

"I wanted to make sure that I was still here for the students. [They] are my main priority," Choi said. "I had to make sure the Board Bucks and ECCash were still accepted for

[them] so it'd be easier to access."

Unlike some surrounding campus restaurants—like Tatte Bakery and Cafe—Pick N' Roll Sushi takes Emerson currency as a form of payment because it's an official vendor on the college campus.

"I'm on the Emerson network... [I'm a] vendor here on campus," Choi said. "My partnership with the property management here has been really tight and they've been super supportive of me and they've been helping me out every way they can."

"It's so convenient," Leila Castellari, a senior visual and media arts major, said. "I live on campus, so you can just scan [your ID] and it's easy. I love it."

In addition to a new restaurant, Choi is also opening a sushi vending machine located in the lobby of Piano Row, which will take ECCash as well as debit and credit cards as payment. While a starting date hasn't been released, Choi said he's ready to get it up and running as soon as possible.

"[It] is coming into place. I just

Choi, pg. 3



Courtesy Monika Kruege

This just in: Many can't afford to pay thousands of dollars to do unpaid labor!

Ana Sophia Garcia-Cubas
Assemat
Beacon Correspondent

It is the summer of 2022 and I've just gotten an internship—unpaid—at a literary review magazine. While an unpaid internship was by no means my best-case scenario, it is better than the internship-less alternative. And I'll get academic credit for it anyway.

It's a good internship: a well-known publication within the publishing industry, remote, with flexible hours. Hell, I could probably work full-time somewhere else and make it work. Most importantly, I have a productive summer to put on my resume. The sky is blue and the birds are singing and my Mexican mother tells me she's proud of me over the phone.

The singing birds are promptly shot down when I visit the Career Development Center and they try to foot me a \$6,536 bill to complete a 4-credit internship.

Low-income students already spend so much of our mental and physical energy trying to navigate Emerson College. When we painstakingly manage to take on the hellish experience that

is applying to internships and succeed, we are faced with yet another barrier to overcome.

Baby boomers love to justify unpaid internships by saying "you get academic credit for it so there is some form of compensation." What they don't tell you is that you have to pay tuition for the damn academic credit. Full rate tuition at that.

And the cherry on top: it is actually illegal to do an unpaid internship without receiving academic credit for it. The entire justification for not paying an intern is that the intern is benefiting more from the experience than the employer will. Since this standard is very vague, the Department of Labor created a "primary beneficiary test" all employers have to pass to ensure their unpaid internship program is legal. The third standard for a legal, unpaid internship is tied to the intern's formal education program by integrated coursework or the receipt of academic credit."

It's not like you'll get arrested for doing an unpaid internship without receiving credit. Employers would receive the most heat for carrying out

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News

Emerson College Students' Union holds second meeting, formulates long-term objectives

Ashlyn Wang
Beacon Correspondent

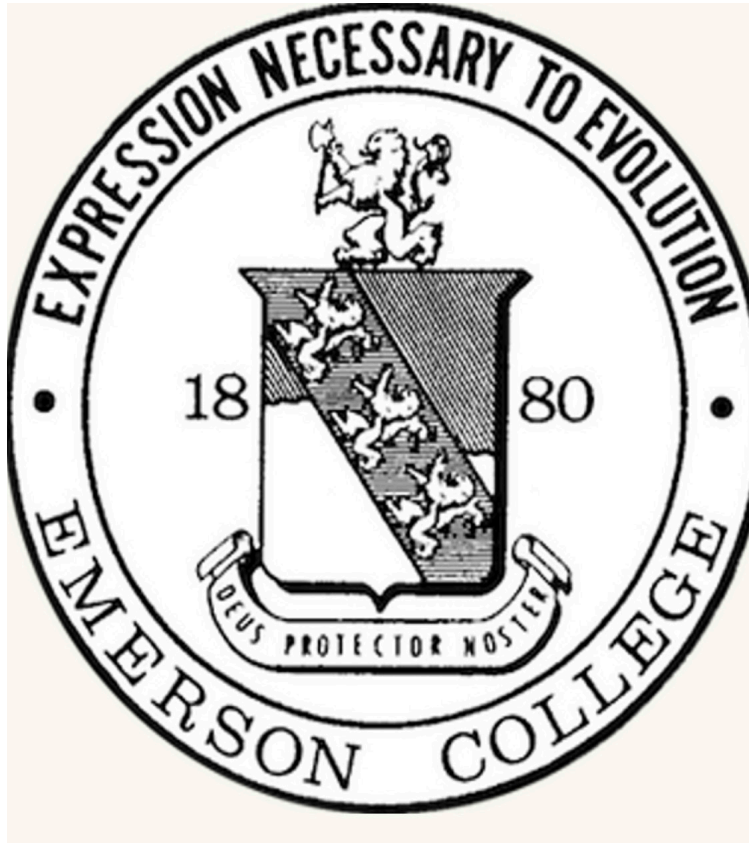
The Emerson College Students' Union held its second general meeting on Sunday to formulate strategies for the union's programs, services, and long-term objectives. The Union also discussed issues facing Emerson students, staff, and faculty.

The organization is newly established, having been formed over the summer to mobilize on-campus issues crucial to students and serve as a representative voice for them in negotiations with Emerson's administrations.

ECSU proposed a core point program consisting of eight points addressing the desires and needs of Emerson students gathered through meetings, polling, and student body demonstrations. These points, according to ECSU's Instagram, include students' entitlement to collective bargaining, demand for financial and administrative transparency, and students' accessibility to health-care services, among others.

"Those are the things we've gathered from being students at Emerson College, and it's going to be constantly under review," said Dylan Young, a sophomore visual media arts major. He serves as ECSU's chairman of digital output, deputy chairman of grassroots output, and media organizer.

"Anytime you would like to make a change to our point program, it's always up for a vote," Young said during the meeting.



ECSU logo / Courtesy ECSU website

"Any part of our program is up to change."

Young went over select ECSU caucuses, including the Student Health, Mutual Aid, and Ministry of Information and explained their functions. The Mutual Aid Caucus is responsible for helping Emerson students get equipment for their independent visual arts

projects. ECSU will develop services for caucuses that provide student services at the meeting, Young said.

Chairman of setting and chairman of treasury Emma Cudahy proposed planning various events to help students learn more about ECSU. Members at the meeting suggested events that the union

could host, including open mics, house shows, movie nights, 'zine skill-sharing workshops, and game nights.

"We're talking about trying to plan some kind of events that aren't necessarily directly students' union content-related, but would be an opportunity for us to tell people what we're about in a space that appeals to Emerson students and would be fun," said Cudahy.

During the meeting, ECSU members reported current issues Emerson students face with Emerson's COVID Policy—the inability of many students to find accurate guidelines, the frequent guesswork by students as to what they need to do in the absence of clear guidance, and the discrepancies arising among Emerson's administrations and levels. In response, ECSU plans to draft a statement that would bring COVID issues into focus.

Robin Jacobson, a VMA student and union member, raised several concerns regarding Emerson's academic accommodations and counseling services. According to Jacobson, students must repeatedly prove their eligibility for accommodations every semester and cannot appeal for a change in accommodations.

"It feels like you're proving to Emerson why you deserve accommodations," Jacobson said. "It's not a fun experience. They basically decide which of the accommodations you ask for, and [you] can't argue."

The only way to contact counseling services is by calling the

office number, which can add unnecessary anxiety for some students. Additionally, the office offers "same-day and urgent care visits every weekday," according to the Emerson Wellness Center Counseling Services website. But Jacobson said they haven't heard of anyone obtaining the same-day care at Emerson.

"People were making deals to get appointments," said Jacobson. "They would get appointments and basically sell it to someone else for something in return, and that became a very popular thing."

ECSU concluded the meeting by discussing its internal communication and decision-making processes, position assignments, and finances to ensure transparency and efficiency. Union members intend to draft bills on the discussed issues to a vote next week. They also plan to host a town hall to interact with the Emerson community by exchanging ideas and sharing plans. Members of Emerson's Staff Union also plan to attend ECSU's town hall to hear from and speak with students.

ECSU hopes 30% of Emerson's student body will sign up for its union drive, which enables students to join the union, and will begin establishing the union's legitimacy as a representative body for students.

"We want full administrative and financial transparency," Young said. "In all of our point print programs, we want sovereignty over our bodies."

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Emerson welcomes Interim School of Communication Dean

Hannah Nguyen
Beacon Staff

Dr. Brent Smith, former chair of the marketing communication department, is serving as interim dean of the School of Communication following former Dean Raul Reis' departure in June.

Reis accepted a position as dean of the Hussman School of Journalism and Media at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in March. Within two months, Emerson announced Smith as his successor. Smith officially stepped into the role on July 1.

"Dr. Smith is an accomplished scholar, educator, consultant, and entrepreneur with expertise in strategy, analytics, ethics, global business, and marketing education," wrote President William Gilligan in the college's initial email statement on May 6. "[He] is well poised to further the important work of the School of Communication."

Prior to joining Emerson in fall 2019, Smith was a tenured professor of marketing at Saint Joseph's University of Philadelphia, dedicating 15 years of his life to the institution. He acted as the interim associate director of the Pedro

Arrupe Center for Business Ethics and developed the university's Master of Science in the marketing program.

At Emerson, Smith was the chairperson of the Department of Marketing Communication and a full-time professor for three years. During his tenure at the college, Smith developed more than 20 courses in undergraduate, graduate, international, and online programs and fostered several teaching innovations.

Smith has a bachelor's in German and economics from Xavier University of Louisiana, a master of business administration in marketing and entrepreneurship from Tulane University, and a doctorate in marketing and strategy and organizational sciences from Drexel University.

As interim dean, Smith will collaborate with department chairs and faculty within the School of Communication, working to strengthen new and existing programs and initiatives, including the newly launched Health and Social Change and Media Psychology majors.

"I think good leadership is important at every step in the life of an institution...I've gotten very familiar with the people, the key



Dr. Brent Smith / Beacon Archives

programs, the priorities of the institution, and I believe I can contribute to just what we need right now," Smith said. "I think [I can] also help us reset as we all return

to whatever this in-person experience is going to mean for us as students, as faculty, and as staff."

Smith hopes to "reset and re-acquaint" the relationships among

students, staff, and faculty, and to foster a community of collaborators with "not only passions, but strengths for what they do."

"When I came in as chair, I think I did a fairly good job of getting this to work outside of our silos," Smith said. "I want to do that on a school-wide basis now... When we come out of our houses, we come out of our silos, and we come in with each other, that's where our best happens."

He plans to enrich the student experience through initiatives like the Dean's Fellowships Program or affiliated professional organizations, including the American Marketing Association and Public Relations Student Society of America. Another priority is to "uplift and celebrate" the work of faculty members as it relates to scholarship.

"I think we do a fairly good job of recognizing teaching," Smith said. "It's probably a secret to many here and beyond that Emerson's School of Communication has some really top-notch researchers, and I want to make sure the world knows that."

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Asian American Day Festival returns to Boston Common

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Beacon Staff and Correspondent

The Boston Common buzzed with vendors and visitors attending the 12th Asian American Day Festival on Saturday afternoon. After a two-year pause due to COVID-19, the annual festival returned in celebration of Mid-Autumn.

The Mid-Autumn Festival, also known as Moon Festival or Mooncake Festival, is a traditional Chinese harvest celebration held during the 15th day of the eighth month of the Lunar Calendar. Similar holidays are celebrated in Japan (Tsukimi), Vietnam (Tết Trung Thu), South Korea (Chuseok), and other countries in East and Southeast Asia. Ceremonies are held to give thanks to the moon in autumn for the successful harvest season and serve as a time for family gatherings. Mooncakes—pastries often filled with sweet bean or lotus seed paste—are traditionally eaten.

The Asian American Day Festival was initiated by the Asian American Association of Boston (AAAB) in 2011. The first festival was held on July 26, 2011, at the China Pearl restaurant in Quincy, Massachusetts. Asian American Day made its way to Boston Common in 2016 and is now annually celebrated on the second Saturday of September.

“Today, [Asian American] Day has become a celebration of Asian American cultures and traditions and serves as a great platform for exchanging information between Asian American and regional ethnic groups,” according to AAAB’s website.

At this year’s festival, vendors offered a variety of foods and goods, including duck wings, Thai tea, handmade calligraphy sets, and

qipao dresses. Live music and dance performances attracted many visitors to the stage at the center of the festivities. Performances included taekwondo and ballet by the Mu Han School, “The Phantom of the Opera” by the Boston Eastern Heritage Chorus, and Dolma, a Chinese-Tibetan dance.

Klysler Yen, the organizing committee news spokesman of the AAAB, believes the heart of the festival lies within these live performances. For Yen, the festival is about understanding and friendship among many groups.

“[Performers] use the stage to come together,” he said. “[The festival is] for Asian [people] but also for Americans, for them to come together and feel together.”

Ting Fang, the executive director of New Legacy Cultural Center—a culture and education organization in Lexington, MA—managed its booth at the festival. Fang talked about the joy of returning to the festival after the two-year hiatus.

“It’s so exciting to be back in-person,” she said. “I like seeing how happy the festival makes the kids who are performing. For them, it’s like a big playdate... It’s a good way of bringing the community together.”

The festival also offers opportunities for attendees to take part in many aspects of Asian culture. John Kerpan, an education coordinator for the Massachusetts Go Association, discussed his passion for Go—“Weiqi” in Chinese—a 3,000-year-old strategy game that was created in China but quickly gained popularity in Japan and Korea and is now played internationally.

“[Go] is about critical thinking, but it’s also about the love of the game,” Kerpan said. “Very little has changed about it in the past

3,000 years.” At his booth, he offered free lessons in Go and encouraged people to sit down at one of the available game boards to play a round. Like the booths that allowed people to mold bread into mooncake designs for free, the aim of this booth was to make an aspect of Asian culture more accessible and interact with attendees.

Antony Huang, running the Bodhi Meditation booth, eagerly handed out flyers advertising weekly meditation sessions and workshops. Huang particularly advertised his meditation classes to students.

“Meditate in the morning to clear your mind,” he said of the meditation style rooted in Buddhism. “It’s good for stressed students. You won’t stress about the little things anymore.”

Flashes of colorful, silk qipao dresses pinned to mannequins and folded across tables attracted attendees. Miranda Tse’s booth represented the Shing Hong Trading Company, a clothing business that has attended the festival annually since 2015. Standing behind an array of red and pink qipao dresses, Tse discussed what selling clothes at the festival meant to her.

“I just like to do something for everyone,” Tse said. “I’m really happy to see all the Asian people together.”

Tse also talked about how the festival and its vendors provide an opportunity to bring Asian communities together.

“This is what we want—to do something for the community,” she said. “We want to have a voice that Asian people are here in Boston.”

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Vendors line Boston Common pathways / Chloë Els Correspondent



Attendees gather to watch performers / Chloë Els Correspondent

Choi extends cuisine beyond Lion’s Den

Cont. from Pg. 1

have to get all the right signage and the labels and everything in there,” Choi said. “That’s made fresh daily just like everything else in the store. I’ll go in there, fill it up as we need, and then throw it away the next morning.”

Choi’s own venture into the sushi industry wasn’t planned, taking up a part-time job as a sushi chef in college.

“When I graduated from college I was using my degree for a few years. I was working extremely long hours and I was grinding it out,” he said. “I said, ‘It’s time for me to work hard for myself.’ I had a lot of other ventures and a lot of ideas, but I always went back to what I did in the past [being a sushi chef].”

Choi’s decision to come to Emerson was influenced by the many opportunities provided by living in downtown Boston, but he said the Emerson student body ultimately made his experience positive.

“I’ve always moved around to different places, and when it came to Boston, [you’re just] an hour away from so many other major cities and you get all four seasons here,” Choi said. “I haven’t met a nicer student body population [than Emerson’s], it’s been amazing.”

Choi is a well-known figure on campus and is beloved by many. Castellari was first introduced through an Emerson promotional video featuring Choi.

“I saw an Emerson YouTube video where they interviewed him...and all the com-

ments were like, ‘We love you!’ and ‘Icon!’,” Castellari said. “That was the first time I recognized his existence...but that [was such] a good, positive [first] impression.”

Kaitlin Curtis, a senior marketing communications major, recalls getting sushi from Choi at the Lion’s Den, experiencing firsthand the reason for his adoration.

“I remember going to get sushi and it was a fun experience because I got sushi, but I also got to have a really cool conversation with him. He was warm and open to having a conversation,” Curtis said. “He is always so open to seeing what Emerson students are up to and [he asks] questions about school and stuff.”

Besides his welcoming personality, Choi’s popularity stems from the quality of his food. The larger site at Pick N’ Roll Sushi has only improved that quality.

“The poke bowls are a step up,” Castellari said. “They have a huge space now. It’s a dedicated sushi space and it feels fresh. It’s so good.”

Choi is well aware of the status he holds within the community but doesn’t always understand why he holds it.

“I just try my best every day, I work hard to keep it consistent, and make sure the food quality is safe,” Choi said. “I know what it was like to be a student, so I just try to make it easy for everybody and give a smile.”

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Illustration Rachel Choi

Student body demands financial transparency

Cont. from Pg. 1

planning and consider the possibility of debt in the future from student loans,” McMahon said. “It’s definitely not an exciting thought, but it’s my reality.”

McMahon’s situation isn’t isolated, with multiple students allocating extra funds to compensate for the increase. Quinn Exceen, a senior VMA major, said they were “very upset” to hear of the tuition raise and how it has created anxiety among students who are responsible for paying their own tuition.

“I see this dramatically affecting students,” Exceen said. “I know people who are paying for college on their own, and I feel for them

when I know they’re the ones who are going to have to cover the bill.”

Mirabella Cue, a junior media studies major, said she is also aware of the already unaffordable tuition rates and its impact on students.

“It’s so expensive...I can’t comprehend how much money I’m paying to be here,” she said.

Cue also highlighted that many funds from the tuition increase might be quickly spent by the college due to rising inflation. The Federal Reserve has hiked interest rates four times, compounding to 2.25%, since the beginning of 2022.

“The price of living is incredibly high, and for students who are financially independent, it’s something that requires constant

thought and planning,” McMahon said.

The tuition increase initially spurred student protests and calls for student participation in the college’s financial decisions. In April, students gathered to protest the increase in the 2 Boylston Place alleyway. The organizing group, Power to the Students, made five demands confronting the college’s financial decision with an April 13 deadline for administration to respond.

The petition garnered over 100 signatures, and Emerson’s administration expressed interest in taking the demands into consideration, but Power to the Students reportedly did not hear anything further from the college.

Now, two weeks into the 2022-23 academic year, students remain unsure of where their money is going, as the college has provided little financial transparency to date.

Students like Exceen hope Emerson will spend the additional money on upgrading campus spaces, like dorms, classrooms, and campus.

Cue hopes the college will lower the cost of tuition in the future.

“I honestly feel like the college has so many buildings and programs that it would be great if they could put that money into trying to overall lower tuition costs,” she said.

For McMahon and many others, the college should provide financial transparency moving forward.

“I hope myself and other students at Emerson become well informed about where their money is going and how they can make the most out of their experience,” she said.

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Opinion

India’s Twitter demands for the Kohinoor back from the United Kingdom is well-grounded

Mariyam Quaisar
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Following the death of Queen Elizabeth II, Indians are demanding the return of the Kohinoor diamond, which is set in a crown made for Queen Elizabeth I. While this request may seem insensitive to some because of the timing, it is long overdue and completely valid.

On the front and center of the Queen Mother’s crown is a 105-carat, oval-shaped jewel proudly known as the Kohinoor, which means “mountain of light.” It was first mined in Kollur Mine, India during the Kakatiya dynasty of the 12th-14th centuries, when it was about 186 carats. After this precious diamond was consecutively stolen by various groups—the Mughals, the Persians, and the Afghans—amidst several periods of violence, the Sikh Maharaja Ranjit Singh successfully brought it back to India in 1813.

Unfortunately, the prized possession was seized once again from Ranjit Singh’s 11-year-old son, Duleep Singh, by the British East India Company in the late 1840s during the annexation of Punjab. The innocent boy was coerced into signing the Treaty of Lahore, which ended the Anglo-Sikh war, but also required Sikhs to hand over Kashmir, Hazara, and Jalandhar Doab to the Britishers. The cherry on top: the treaty included a provision that Duleep would drop the precious Kohinoor in the hands of Lord Dalhousie, a Scottish statesman and governor-general of India *eye roll*.

The British East India Company, a multinational corporation established for trading, was sent to India as traders in spices with a royal charter by the British royals. As we all know, white peo-

ple love to colonize, and that is exactly what the British Company did after their establishment in India. A period of time known as the British Raj (rule) lasted from 1858-1947.

When the Kohinoor was unveiled to the public of England, at the Great Exhibition of 1851, many Britishers exposed the British East India Company’s plunder imperialism in India. Obviously, someone recognized it, but did anyone do anything about it? No.

Instead, the Kohinoor was presented to Queen Victoria. Prince Consort Albert had it recut to mitigate the scandals in England, then placed in the crowns of Queen Alexandra and Queen Mary before the stunning jewel was eventually set in the Queen Mother’s crown in 1937. The diamond became a member of the British crown jewels, never to be seen by the land where it originated again.

Queen Elizabeth II’s death has prompted Twitter users to demand the return of the diamond to its rightful home—definitely a reasonable request. Various memes and tweets are soaring through the internet trolling the UK for being thieves and plotting hilarious means to steal the diamond back.

Jokes aside, though, since the time the Kohinoor was snatched from Duleep Singh through stealth and deception, Indians have sought the Kohinoor’s return. When India finally gained independence from British colonizers in 1947, the government asked for it back. Then asked again at Queen Elizabeth II’s coronation in 1953. But, of course, the group of people known for colonizing several parts of the world denied the requests under the idea that there were “no legal grounds” for the Kohinoor’s restitution.



Illustration Rachel Choi

I just have one question: what were the legal grounds for Britishers to colonize occupied land, murder millions of people, and steal goods? Oh right, there were none.

Despite numerous polite requests, many believe the chances of the diamond’s return to be extremely slim. Unfortunately, I believe the same. The British royal establishment is in love with its delusional superior colonial power and the beautiful Kohinoor is a symbol of that nonexistent power which may remain clutched in its grimy hands.

A petition to return the Kohinoor was posted on LinkedIn by Venktesh Shukla,

the founder and managing partner of investment company Monta Vista Capital. Shukla aims to get a million signatures, his ambitious goal driven by his strong belief that “the British should return the Kohinoor diamond to India now.” He labels the UK as an honorable country, saying the honorable action to take is to return the “loot” to its rightful owner. Additionally, Shukla says those in support all over the world should go to their closest embassy or consulate of the UK to present this petition in a peaceful manner.

As this movement continues, the British royals will have to respond. If

the comment is not, verbatim, “we are so sorry we suck, we will return your property with interest” then I expect Indians to continue their insistence. The British colonization of India still holds a sensitive place in everyone’s heart, and the stolen Kohinoor is the symbol of this dark time. Indians are showing consistent strength and perseverance as they rightfully demand the return of the “mountain of light.”

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Reading is trending, and that’s a good thing

Rachel Hackam
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The summer before second grade, I caught the reading bug. With the help of the pandemic and online bookish content, many others have since caught it, too. Social media platforms like Youtube and Tiktok have romanticized reading, making the hobby trendy and changing young peoples’ perceptions of literature.

Online book content provides individuals opportunities to develop their own reading preferences and to open their mind to literature. I discovered an intense passion for reading on an annual beach trip with my parents, starting with the Rainbow Magic Book series, soon devouring John Green’s novels, later venturing into adult fiction, and occasionally dipping into romances or classics.

While I have loved to read for years, some people have picked up the habit more recently. According to a January 2022 article in Publishers Weekly, book sales rose almost 9% from 2020 to 2021. The increase in sales lines up with the growing popularity of Booktok—a section of TikTok dedicated to literature-focused creators.

Booktok’s influence spread rapidly, influencing established brands like Barnes & Noble to implement sections dedicated to books recommended frequently on the platform. These books are often fast paced and easily digestible, with loveable characters and a dash of romance. Madeline Miller’s “Song of Achilles” and Taylor Jenkins Reid’s “The Seven Husbands of Eve-



Illustration Monika Krueger

lyn Hugo” are some examples of books that gained popularity online.

Creators share books they’d sell their soul to be able to read for the first time again, generating international discourse about novels. Beautiful quotes and polarizing opinions fill the comment section beneath a video raving about “The Secret History” by Donna Tartt, while other creators rank Emily Henry’s three novels, enraging those who disagree.

The discourse online assists young readers as they begin to form their own opinions surrounding books. After seeing someone eloquently describe what they like about a book, a young reader may begin to think critically about their current and past reads, building upon the framework and structure of others’ opinions.

While people may initially choose a

certain book to follow a trend, enjoying that first book is a gateway to reading as a hobby. TikTok recommendations segue into browsing a bookstore or perusing a library’s shelves.

Booktok became so popular that it traveled towards more mainstream TikTok content, supported by influencers with larger followings. On April 25, 2021, Emma Chamberlain posted a video on her YouTube channel titled “Reading Makes You Hot,” where she shared her newfound love and appreciation for reading. In the video, she explains that reading gives her a way to decompress, separate from her phone and social media. In following videos, Chamberlain continued to promote reading as a hobby, joining the community of creators known for their reading-based content.

Like Booktok, Youtube’s Booktube

provides a community for literature-focused creators. Creators on both platforms recommend a diverse range of books, allowing new readers to find something they’ll enjoy. Viewers and creators alike share the common interest of reading, sparking a connection and building trust between the audience and creator.

Booktuber Jack Edwards created a series called “celebrity book club” where he reads celebrity book recommendations and judges their reading taste while expanding his own. Edwards has read books recommended by Harry Styles, Taylor Swift, and Olivia Rodrigo. He also joined “Supermodel Book Clubs” and read books recommended by Emily Ratajkowski, Kaia Gerber, and Camille Rowe.

This type of content makes reading more intriguing as pop culture icons engage in the hobby. When idolized individuals like supermodels read, their large following often mimics their actions, hoping to become more like the person they’ve placed up on a pedestal. By intertwining reading with other popular topics and connecting it to well-known individuals, Booktok and Booktube creators make reading more relevant to audiences everywhere.

Similarly, on her channel “Uncarley,” Carley Thorne read and psychoanalyzed three books recommended by a celebrity. After reading Lorde’s favorite books, Thorne said she developed a better understanding of why Lorde takes breaks from social media and the inspiration behind her music.

The discourse online recommends a diverse range of genres and even influenced me to step outside my comfort

zone. Over the last year I’ve alternated between Joan Didion’s collections of essays and lighthearted romance. Between Sally Rooney’s character-driven narratives and plot-focused thrillers. I’ve realized I appreciate stunning prose and character-focused narratives more than a busy plot, but books with a captivating plot, strong characters, and gorgeous writing will always hold a place in my heart. The last few months of exploring stories outside my comfort zone transported me back to that summer over 12 years ago when I first discovered my love for words.

Bookish content online exposes everyone to new sides of reading. When something like reading becomes trendy, it might lead someone who once viewed reading as “nerdy” to pick up a book. The niche reading communities on platforms like Tiktok and Youtube help people find new books both inside and out of their comfort zones. Romance lovers can easily find creators discussing their favorite tropes and literary fiction fans can find as many new recommendations as they want. Booktok gets people excited about reading, reigniting old passions for literature and sparking new ones, and improving reading’s reputation. These new and existing loves for books and reading not only increase readership of popular books but also boost sales for lesser known books. Online discourse surrounding reading makes literature more accessible, rewriting the narrative surrounding what it takes to be a reader.

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Unpaid internships force low-income students deeper into debt

Cont. from Pg. 1

illegal unpaid internships, which means whether you care about breaking the law matters less than whether your employer does.

In my case, the organization I worked for stated that getting academic credit was a requirement for me to participate in their internship program, so I couldn't just do it without credit. Bummer.

I understand the usual transaction between Emerson College and a student is that the student pays the college and the college provides a service.

Now, explain to me where the college is providing a service by making me drop over \$6,000 so I can legally get exploited somewhere else.

One could argue the 4-credit course Emerson makes you take is a workshop—and there is some coursework attached to it—so it's not like you're paying for nothing. I simply wonder whether the workshop and a couple of page-long reflections are worth \$6,000. \$6,536, to be exact.

Now let's look at the solutions the CDC gave me when I told them I couldn't afford the 4-credit internship.

The first resource they pointed me towards was the Emerson Enhancement Fund, which is essentially a fund you can apply for if you want to carry out a project you can't afford that would benefit your academic and professional development. Research projects, study abroad expenses,



Courtesy Monika Krueger

and unpaid internships are examples of what this fund can be used for.

That sounds like the perfect solution to the problem, right? The only caveat is you need to line up the opportunity before you apply to the fund. So, you need to be already hired for the internship or accepted to the abroad program, etc. That can't possibly be that much of an issue, right?

According to the Emerson College website, "funding for Summer and Fall term projects should be applied for in the Spring semester and funding for Spring term projects should be applied for in the Fall semester." The deadline to apply for

the spring semester is January 18 and the deadline for the fall is April 5.

So, if you want to do an internship in the summer, you need to have been offered the job no later than January 18.

Summer internships don't even start until May or June. Applications don't even open until February or March, with some of the least competitive ones not opening until April or May.

Who on Earth has their summer internship lined up five months in advance? The company hasn't even posted the goddamn job opening at that point. The intern is barely a glint in the company's

eyes.

The CDC also told me I could receive financial aid for the summer. Knowing how financial aid works at Emerson, I knew I'd be lucky to get a grant and the package would inevitably be about 70% loans—and it definitely would not cover the full \$6,536 price tag. Financial aid did not solve the issue of having to pay money to do unpaid labor.

Finally, we arrived at a solution.

The good news is there's currently a band-aid on this gushing bullet wound. The community development experience is a non-tuition, 1-credit course that can be used to circumvent the legal issues associated with unpaid internships. It can only be used if you're interning with a non-profit organization, which I was. But not everyone is so lucky.

You don't get to have an internship on your transcript, nor do you get to have four or eight academic credits—even if you're doing work that qualifies for four or eight academic credits.

The only difference between a "community development experience" and an internship at Emerson College is how much you're willing to pay.

It feels a bit like having your career held for ransom, doesn't it? Pay up or miss out on an incredibly valuable experience to pad your resume, which will help build your professional future. And we all know how vital experience is when it comes to getting a foot into the uber-competitive industries most of us plan on joining.

If you're a low-income student here at Emerson (or really just someone not capable of dropping six bands on a technicality), you are probably very familiar with the feeling that you're being held economically hostage.

Resident Assistants who can't afford to stop being Resident Assistants. Honors students who can't afford to have their GPA drop or they lose their scholarship. Students who didn't get enough federal aid had to take out shitty private loans.

The only ways to make this college anything close to viable come at the expense of low-income students' time, energy, and mental health.

It is unfair that Emerson College operates under the notion that every one of its students has a trust fund waiting for them back home, or worse, assumes low-income students are happy and willing to take on untenable amounts of debt to fill the college's deep, deep pockets.

Chances are you didn't know you'd need to pay tuition to get credit for an internship. It comes as a surprise to most people, but it does even more so to first-generation students.

Again and again, Emerson College proves it's an institution whose first thought is always with its privileged students—the ones who can look at a \$6,536 price tag without breaking out in a cold sweat. It's clear the college does not care how many low-income students are bulldozed while they're busy drafting up a new tuition hike.

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A connection resistant to displacement, battling loneliness during times of war

Margarita Ivanova
Beacon Correspondent

It was late February during my study abroad program in The Netherlands when I first heard about Russia's potential attack on Ukraine. The talk of an invasion was simply a rumor until Thursday, Feb. 24. When the news came, no one really knew what to do.

There were many students around me squirming around in fear and ignorance even though we were living in The Netherlands—one of the most disconnected countries in Europe from the war.

The fear didn't last long though, as spring break came around a few weeks later. We had the privilege of trading our thoughts of war for our travels to Italy, which was going to be our living fantasy for the next week. Spending money like it was a game of monopoly, we first hit Venice, and after three days of gondola rides, it soon came time to frolic away to Florence.

It was Thursday, March 8—International Women's Day—and every restaurant in Venice was handing out bundles of yellow flowers. The day felt like magic; every woman seemed to share a glow of solidarity, feeling acknowledged in a special way.

As my friends and I stood up to depart the train back from Florence, I saw her: a woman with a hopeless expression, two bags in hand, and a foreigners confusion that matched mine. I can't really put the feeling into words, but it led me to give her my flowers.

"Are you Russian?" she asked me in Russian.

As a Bulgarian, I was familiar with the Slavic-rooted language, and found a way to communicate through gestures and an understanding of every other word.

She told me she was a Ukrainian refugee who needed help; she didn't know where she was going, she didn't have money, and she was meeting someone somewhere, with a passport deprived of destination. Her name: Anzhelika Holdobina. As we both got off from the next stop, I told her I was a journalist and she quickly gave me her phone number before charging off to her next train.

Her presence led me to realize the reality of the refugee crisis. I was no longer



Anzhelika Holdobina photographed in Ukraine before the war /
Courtesy Margarita Ivanova

distantly watching news interpretations of asylum seekers from a disconnected part of the world. Our technological exchange would soon foster a connection that allowed me to skim the surface of life for refugees. Staying in touch with Holdobina, as well as another family, has not only heightened my awareness and satisfied my curiosity, but it has given them the hope and tenderness of a stranger. Communication gives them the reminder that they are loved and appreciated.

Holdobina and I have been in contact on Viber and WhatsApp ever since our exchange, and I received permission from Anzhelika to share bits of our correspondence throughout the past six months.

As we have maintained contact, I have been able to follow her journey as she attempts to rebuild her life in Italy. Her story is more than just a political slogan for perseverance, but an example that the statistics and headlines we consume affect real people in heartbreaking ways.

March 8, 2022 : "Hi Anzhelika, are you doing okay?"

March 9, 2022: "Hi Margarita, housing is not very good, money too, and I need a job, and a family that would take me to live with them, or a single woman. Please help."

After receiving this, I started a GoFundMe, but I was back in the Netherlands. There wasn't much I could physically do to help.

Holdobina had just returned from a three-day journey that bridged through Poland, Austria, to Italy, parting with her

husband and son in Kyiv, who were fighting in the war.

March 13, 2022:

Her loneliness changed course when she found a short-term sense of peace in a room with a grandmother and four small grandchildren who were also in Florence running from the war.

Although there are many organizations and volunteers providing humanitarian aid, Evgeniya Volkova, a Bulgarian-Ukrainian real estate agent part of a non-profit seeking to integrate refugees into family housing, says the process is not an easy one.

"It's really great when we see families hosting refugees, but the reality is that the other 90% of refugees who don't get so lucky run the risk of being homeless," she said. "This fear and lack of comfort makes them very depressed."

During our conversation, Holdobina talked about a comfortable sense of food security, but said finding work was already extremely difficult.

March 14, 2022:

"Hi Anzhelika, how is your family back home? How are you staying in touch with them?"

"I can keep in touch with my family through the internet. But it is really difficult thinking about their position versus mine. They are fighting in a war and I am here with silence and beauty."

"Have you had any luck finding a job?"

"I am trying to get a job, but since I don't know the language, they won't take me anywhere, and I want some kind of work at least."

Volkova highlighted the difficulty in job integration also outside of the language barrier, saying that many doctors and highly-ranked professionals are being cornered into working low-wage jobs that don't align with their strengths.

March 25, 2022:

"Hi Anzhelika, The Go Fund Me donations went through, we raised over \$300!"

"Oh thank you Margarita for your help. I do need the money, I don't work yet. They help feed us here, but besides food we also need personal items. Hopefully we will be going home to Ukraine soon."

To the average person, \$300 doesn't seem like much, but at the time, it doubled Italy's approved monthly payment of €300 to Ukrainian arrivals.

April 22, 2022: "How is everything Anzhelika?"

"Hello Margarita, life goes on. We are resting, waiting for good news."

I told her that the money was wired, and she thanked me, but the hope of work for her was seemingly slimming down.

"We are still waiting for working documents, so we are not working yet, but we are being helped by humanitarian aid. I don't know when the documents will be ready, for now we are patiently waiting."

"Thank you Margarita for being so attentive and kind."

I couldn't understand why she was thanking me. It felt like I was doing less than the bare minimum at this point, feeling very privileged each time I reached out.

May 20, 2022: "Do you think you will get to go home soon?"

She was now living in Empoli, Italy. She feared the thought of going home, and said it would be too dangerous, though her current situation remained precarious.

"I want to stay here, I am learning the language, the state helps with the purchase of products, but no they still haven't told us about our living situation."

August 19, 2022:

"Hi Anzhelika, How are you? It has been a while. Have you received your working papers? How is your living space? Are things more comfortable?"

"Hi Margarita, Life goes on. I am learning a language in an online school. It's vacation time in Italy, and everyone is

on vacation. I am not working yet. We are waiting for the papers. Maybe in Autumn something will change. How are you? Where are you? You have an interesting life, you travel."

I filled her in on my life and my family, and then asked about her loved ones back in Ukraine. I talked about some of my dreams, and sent her some prayers.

"Good evening Margarita,

My husband and son and I talk on the phone, and sometimes by video link, but of course this is not the same as a living connection. I really want to hug them, but only God knows how soon it will happen. Thank you for your concern and prayers. It really helps to live and hope for the best."

"And your living situation? Are you with the same people?"

"Hi Margarita, yes, we still live together with the grandmother and the three grandchildren from Ivano Frankivsk. We are also helped by the state of Italy. And everything is good with my adult children, if you can say so. These are not easy times for Ukraine. You are a smart woman. You will do great things, and I wish you strength, health, and well being. May all of your dreams come true."

Present day:

The refugee crisis continues, with hopes of going home continuously waning for those who are displaced.

During times of conflict and war, we tend to hyperfocus on the policy, the resources, and the military, to the point where we leave behind some of the most basic principles of empathy and human connection. Although many of us are disconnected from those experiencing the effects of the war in Ukraine, technology has a set of arms that extend beyond the reach of our experiences.

By taking advantage of this communication, we can share love to the individuals running from war, and fighting the battle of loneliness that exists within working to maintain a sense of direction. It becomes repetitive to share or display solidarity without application.

Show refugees they aren't alone, not just by donating and keeping up with the war, but by sharing a sense of presence through kind words and listening, just as you would if it was your family.

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Living Arts

Student-run online jewelry shop thrives as new earthy designs and collaborations

Karenn Umscheid
Beacon Staff

From disco balls to shark teeth and magic mushrooms, a student-run online jewelry shop featuring fun, eclectic designs has garnered traction among the Emerson community and beyond. The shop has grown through creative promotional strategies and music industry collaborations.

Livy Burdo, a junior business of creative enterprises student, developed a love for crafts and nature during her childhood. In November of 2021, she found a way to combine these passions via an online jewelry shop selling uniquely named beaded necklaces and earrings.

While Burdo has always been involved with the arts and creating different accessories and crafts, the pandemic allowed her more time to cultivate this hobby. Soon enough, Burdo’s affinity for making beaded jewelry outgrew its place as a quarantine craft and transformed into a small business.

“I was creating so many necklaces so rapidly and just really wanted to be able to share them with my friends and sell them for fun,” Burdo said in an interview with the Beacon.

To expand the scope of potential customers, Burdo decided to open an Etsy shop. Since then, her business grew from a few occasional sales to loved ones to around 20 sales a month.

“I thought [Etsy] would be the easiest way for me to sell the goods while also marketing to people who might not be in my general social circle,” Burdo said. “Getting the products out there to international people and people who live all over the U.S.”

Burdo differentiates her shop from other Etsy jewelry businesses through her natural aesthetic, which combines her coastal upbringing in Fairfield, Connecticut and Yarmouth Port, Massachusetts, and her connection to nature.

“I grew up near the water so I love water and mountains,” she

said. “It’s not super Bohemian, but I feel like my jewelry is really beachy and earthy, which is definitely distinguishable.”

Burdo currently makes dangle earrings and bead necklaces, which allow her to focus on and thoroughly explore both accessories in a variety of innovative ways and sets her apart from other shops.

“I also feel like the biggest thing is that the aesthetic of the shop is really consistent and stands out from others,” she said.

An expressive aspect of Burdo’s brand is the unique names of her products. Where most Etsy stores will focus on descriptive names to draw in consumers, Burdo’s focus on creativity points to her aspirations outside of Etsy, like selling on her own website, which sets her products apart from others.

Her favorite product to create is the shark tooth necklace—cleverly named “Bite-Size Necklace”—which is inspired by growing up near a lot of great white sightings, and currently sells for \$27 on her Etsy shop.

Her shop also boasts products named “Disco Diva,” “the night we met,” and “written in the stars,” demonstrating her devotion to music and adding character.

Burdo, who is working towards a minor in environmental studies, emphasized the importance of sustainable production through supporting fellow small businesses.

“I try to make sure I am conscious about where I am buying my jewels,” she said. “There’s a small business near my home that I love where they sell a lot of beads, and all the jewelry they sell there is so beautiful, so I frequent it a lot.”

Burdo transferred to Emerson in the spring of her sophomore year and majored in BCE with a focus in the music industry, but her jewelry store has become an outlet to explore different aspects of the entrepreneurship field.

“Once I started playing around with my company more and talking to my professor, and having different friends be really



“Disco Diva” and “midnight cruise” sold by Livvy Burdo / *Courtesy Livvy Burdo*

encouraging about it, I [became] more open to using BCE as a way to explore so many different creative realms,” Burdo said.

Among Burdo’s many interests is a love for music, which motivated her collaboration on a recent jewelry collection with friend and musician Hana Eid.

“[Eid] was ready to release a new single, and she reached out to me over the idea,” Burdo said. “She basically helped design every single piece and market it. It was so much fun.”

Eid’s music is at the intersection of soft indie folk and electric guitar-based indie rock. Ahead of her recent single, “Moonroof,” Eid worked with Burdo to create a lyrically inspired jewelry collection.

“Almost all the pieces are directly named after a lyric,” Eid explained. “The [car earrings] are named ‘midnight cruise’ which is one of the lines in ‘Moonroof.’ The phases of the moon bracelet, [titled] ‘in phases’ is a piece I really love, and I think is really symbolic of how the song talks about the phases of a relationship.”

Eid said she loved choosing the colors she envisioned for the song and making the energy of the music into something tangible. She feels proud of the creative expression within not just the lyricism, but also of what each song means

to her, and how the jewelry collection encapsulates those meanings.

“I’ve always been really passionate about music as an art form and finding how that connects to other art forms,” Eid said.

Eid and Burdo collaborated on designs and colors virtually, sharing a love of earth tones. They communicated via Google docs and swapped Pinterest boards to achieve their ideal designs.

“I really want people to feel connected to me on a personal level and down to earth,” Eid said. “Going for those earthy kind of

vibes has really helped with that.”

Burdo hopes to continue artist collaborations and expand from a solely online platform to selling in-person.

“Next summer, I’m going to talk to some local businesses about selling in their shops,” she said. “I’d like to also be able to frequent different arts and crafts fairs, as well as being able to work with micro-influencers who live in different areas of the world so I’m able to get a broader audience.”

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8 ball earrings from Livy Burdo’s collection / *Courtesy Livvy Burdo*



8 ball earrings from Livy Burdo’s collection / *Courtesy Livvy Burdo*

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Emerson professor incorporates love of heavy metal music into BBQ sauce company



Carnivora drummer Dan DeLucia drinking a bottle of Black Mass BBQ sauce. / Courtesy Douglas Quintal

Izzy Mitchell
Beacon Correspondent

What started as a passion project in 2014 has since created a harmonious heavy metal barbecue sauce spearheaded by one Emerson faculty member.

Marketing professor Douglas Quintal created Black Mass BBQ as a way to combine his passions of music and cooking. His sauce caters to fans of horror, metal, and punk music. Though the two may seem like an unlikely pair, it goes together like peanut butter and jelly... or barbecue sauce and death metal.

“It just comes together in something that is really unlike anything that’s out there,” Quintal said in an interview with the Beacon.

After years of experience with marketing positions for record labels and the music scene, this is Quintal’s first independent business venture. His brand took off during quarantine, when he would spend his free time in the kitchen with his kids, teaching them about different cultures through new flavors and spices. By choosing a random spot on the globe and making a native dish, he was able to hone his culinary skills and double down on building his brand.

All Black Mass BBQ sauces are gluten-free, vegan-friendly, and come in a range of spice levels ranging from a slight kick to “oh, shit.” Quintal combines a vinegar-molasses base in a symphony of heat, smoke, and sweetness.

Aside from occasional help from his two children, Quintal is the maestro behind all aspects of the four-day process from selecting the ingredients to cooking, bottling, labeling, and shipping the finished product. When in season, he can be found in his garden harvesting the home-grown peppers that give his sauce its kick.

“It’s just me and the people who help me spread the word and that’s it,” he said.

With a background in performing, his goal is to serve the under-ground, overlooked communities.

“We all love barbeque,” Quintal said. “I wanted something that had as much attitude as it had flavor and spice. I really wanted to try to get a following around it based on the people I saw that already possess that attitude.”

Quintal affectionately refers to The Butcher Babies, a heavy metal band from the West Coast, as his “guinea pigs.” These friends have acted as Quintal’s unofficial product testers since they encouraged him to put his sauce on the market almost 10 years ago.

Since then, the bottles have been

passed through backyard barbecues—made popular by word of mouth—and through product endorsement from metal bands all over the country.

Heidi Shepherd, one of The Butcher Babies’ frontwomen, has been seen posting rave reviews of the sauce on social media, saying the sauce left her tastebuds “dancing.”

“It’s just finding creative ways to get in,” Quintal said when discussing how the brand gained traction.

Black Mass BBQ has appeared at

stuff because I have a point of reference,” he said. “I’m coming at it from an academic perspective, and a business perspective, but I’m also coming at it from a practical perspective because these are things I’m going through, and a lot of times it’s about paying attention to my own advice.”

Even in the midst of the pandemic when classes were hybrid and students were struggling to stay engaged, senior marketing major Anna Grace said her time spent in Quintal’s Brands, Organizations,



Chris Warner of Alphamega sporting a Black Mass t-shirt. / Courtesy Douglas Quintal

metalhead events around the Boston area, using the connections he made from his time spent performing. Quintal’s unique sauce can be found at blackmassbbq.com.

The sauce has grown a following from anyone lucky enough to get a taste, including fans from metal bands like The Haxons, Rob Zombie, and Alpha Mega. Even Ash Costello of New Year’s Day tried some, and while she finds it a touch spicy, her husband allegedly “sleeps with the bottle.”

The possibilities for this small brand are endless in terms of where it goes next, and Quintal is looking to expand the company through a copacker or setting up a roadside shop.

“If it does take off the way I hope it would—that I think it will—it would be nice to not have to be a one-man operation,” he said.

When he is not working on his company, Quintal enjoys his time teaching marketing courses and using his experience in business as a learning opportunity for his students.

“I think it helps teaching this

and Strategies class was full of real-life examples, creating a dynamic classroom environment.

Often caught repping Black Mass’s t-shirt, Grace’s greatest takeaway from the class spanned beyond the textbook. Quintal’s brand is an inspiration to his students who aspire to create such ventures of their own.

“What makes a brand a brand in terms of not only their mission statement, but what else do they do?” Grace asked. “[What do they do] in terms of partnership work, in terms of philanthropy work, behind the scenes to make sure their brand is established and catching across multiple communities? To see how he created a company, [while] we were looking at [accomplished] ones, was super cool.”

That’s exactly what Black Mass BBQ is all about. Quintal continues to make and share the food he loves with the people he cares about, combining his passion for music and cooking in a way that fuels the fire inside of metalheads and head-bangers alike.

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All-Troupe show “Too Loud” aims to excite and welcome new comedians

Jackson Bailey
Beacon Correspondent

The Emerson Comedy Alliance All-Troupe comedy showcase is set to return on Sept. 16 with a slew of performers promoting their respective comedy troupes.

A total of 12 organizations will be participating in the event, including improv teams such as This is Pathetic, Stroopwafel, and Swomo.

Sketch comedy troupes such as The Girlie Project, Goose Troupe, and Chocolate Cake City will also be taking part, as well as a mix of stand-up comedy organizations such as Stand-Up in the Park and Inside Joke.

Troupes will use their allotted time to introduce their comedy and performance styles, giving extra attention this year to promoting socialization amongst comedians.

“We’ve restructured the format of the All-Troupe show in a way where we as the comedy troupes aren’t performing at these people, but rather we’re performing for these people,” said Breanna Nesbith, Stand-Up In the Park treasurer and Chocolate Cake City writing liaison. “[We are] fostering a comedic arts community where they create a genuine interest [comedians] want to learn more about and enjoy.”

In the past, the All-Troupe show’s purpose has been to promote comedy troupe auditions for sketch and improv comedy troupes with limited spots. Though much of the early comedy season is centered around comedic auditions—auditions which will take place following the all-troupe show—this season will emphasize cooperation amongst comedians rather than exclusion.

“The biggest concern is that performing at these people for so long has not at all reflected what the Emerson Comedic Arts Community tries to do, which is make comedy accessible for anyone regardless of experience,” Nesbith said.

Creating a community within the audition process also promotes a social aspect of student comedy. At the upcoming showcase, it’s expected that there will be a solid mix of both performance and social interaction, feeding into the mission of The Emerson Comedy Alliance.

“By hosting a mixer followed by a show, we are promoting what we do as a troupe more than saying ‘hey, look at us,’” said Derbyn president Emily Hammond. “We want to show off what makes each troupe unique and what would entice you to join.”

In the upcoming school year, troupes are emphasizing the impor-

ance of incorporating community, friendship, and fun into their usual series of events.

“The troupes are committing to hosting a series of workshops and get-togethers,” Hammond said. “I know [Emerson Comedy Workshop] just held a puppet workshop. My troupe, Derbyn, held a community show where people were encouraged to help us put a variety show together.”

Nesbith noted that, in past years, she’d seen a sort of hierarchy where troupes receive more attention than individual comedians.

“We want to break down the [idea] that because you’re in a troupe, your comedy or style as a comedian is superior to anybody who isn’t in a troupe or has the access to a troupe,” Nesbith said.

In an effort to combat any sort of hierarchy this year, the alliance aims to be more inclusive for prospective performers and comedians.

“Troupes are really breaking down the walls,” Nesbith said. “We’re doing community shows where people who aren’t even in a troupe can come out and pitch a sketch. We’re doing workshops open to the entire community. We’re doing rolling auditions now.”

“There’s not only one opportunity to be in a troupe; you’re going to see a lot of opportunities throughout the semester to be in a troupe,” she continued. “Once you gain familiarity and comfort with a troupe, you can audition at a later point.”

Following the All-Troupe show on the 16th, auditions will pick up across the Emerson comedy scene. Auditions will be held amongst improv and sketch troupes and will take on many forms. Some troupes, such as Derbyn, will hold creatively ambiguous auditions where performers can choose their own audition processes. Improv troupes such as SWOMO, Stroopwafel, and This is Pathetic will run a joint improv audition on Sept. 25. Multiple troupes, such as Flawed Comedy, will hold auditions on a rolling basis throughout the semester.

“I am looking forward to seeing how improv auditions go, as our three improv troupes are doing a joint audition,” Hammond said. “There will also be a comedians of color showcase that Stand Up in the Park is putting on in November.”

The showcase is set to kick off the upcoming season with a warm welcome to all audience members, comedians, and potential future troupe members.

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Emerson College Troupe Alliance logo. / Courtesy ECTA Instagram

Sports

Men’s and women’s cross country captains gear up for their final tours as Lions

Jason Tulchin
Beacon Staff

Following a season in which the Emerson women’s and men’s cross country teams placed 16th and 30th in the Division III East Regionals respectively, the Lions’ three captains now direct their attention to cultivating a welcoming and development-focused environment.

The team announced its schedule for the 2022 season via an Instagram post on Aug. 18.

The Lions’ season opener was originally scheduled to take place at the Endicott Invitational on Sept. 10, but Emerson pulled out of the race. Luckily Emerson was able to compete in the Smith College Invitational on Sept. 10th where they placed 4th out of 6 teams. The men and women’s teams placed 4th and 7th, respectively, and averaged a 5k time of 18:59 and 25:11.

Women’s senior captain Paige Thimmesch noted the men’s overall excellent performance, while the women’s team saw a bigger gap in its times. Thimmesch also commended the underclassmen’s ability to stay in a pack.

“They were keeping up that consistent

cy from the workouts,” Thimmesch said. “They were really good at staying together and supporting each other.”

Men’s senior captain Oliver Glass, who ran a 17:17 at Smith and placed 27th in the men’s 5k, sees the beginning of the season as an opportunity to get the first-year students accustomed to running in college.

“It’s all about setting the tone, getting everybody in gear and ready to go for the season,” he said.

Sophomore Joe Norris and freshman John Lanza rounded out the top men’s runners with an 18:40 and 18:45, placing 42nd and 43rd respectively. Junior Samuel Cahill was close behind in 46th, hauling in a 19:06 5k.

Thimmesch, who ran a 29:41 and placed 86th, sees the beginning of the season as a good baseline for the rest to come.

“I try not to put too much pressure on myself when it comes to the first race,” they said. “But I end up not listening to myself and putting way too much pressure [on myself]... So hopefully this year I’ll listen to myself, my coaches, and my teammates.”

The Lions’ third and final senior cap-

tain Emily Hammond—who clocked a 32:30 and placed 89th—is keeping an eye on the rising star talent for Emerson.

“I’m expecting for us to have a lot of new runners coming in,” She said. “We lost a few of our girls last year due to transferring and graduation, [so] I’m excited for Sam Zannotti, who is a rising sophomore. I think she’s gonna do really well.”

Zannotti sustained an injury towards the end of last season and has been training hard ever since to prepare for this year. She started strong at Smith, placing 19th and running a 20:57 5k. Thimmesch also lauded Zannotti’s performance, along with first-year freshman runner Olivia Kardos, who clocked a 22:09 at Smith, as well as sophomore Tierney McKeown, who ran a 26:38.

“This is [McKeown’s] first time running because she was involved in a program last year,” Thimmesch said. “But she will this year.”

With plenty of strong teams going toe-to-toe in the New England Women and Men’s Athletic Conference, the Lions will need all hands on deck.

“The NEWMAC is one of the best conferences for cross country, not only in



The women’s 2021-2022 track team / Courtesy Shannon Norton

New England, but in the country,” Glass said. “Every time we go up against a conference opponent, we’re going up against some of the best Division III runners in the country”.

Among the mix of strong opponents, the Lions have their sights set on a handful of rival teams.

“As we’re a smaller school, one of our bigger competitors is Gordon College”, Hammond said. “Our goal is to always try and stay near or beat them as well as Babson [College].”

The captains for the 2022 season all have their own goals. For Thimmesch, they want to keep the Lions close.

“I want to create a team atmosphere of ‘no-one left behind,’” they said. “There’s no hierarchy—we’re all a team [...] no matter what age or what position that we’re in.”

The team’s culture is a main priority for Hammond is continuing to keep a

steady unity between the Lions.

“One of the things that I’m really good at is team bonding,” she said. “Things like hosting pasta parties and doing fun events.”

Glass hopes to pass his experience on to the next generation of Emerson runners.

“I just want to bestow to the young guys everything I’ve learned over the last few years”, he said. “Everyone in our classes had a unique experience in terms of running the D3 experience— but [I want to try] to get them to maximize what they can get out of the sport.”

The Lions hit the turf again this Saturday, Sept. 17 in the Pop Crowell Invitational at Gordon College.

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Quantity and Quality: Geographically diverse Lions find early success in fresh faces

Tyler Foy
Beacon Staff

Looking to rebound after a dismal 2021-22 season, the Emerson men’s soccer team seems to have found its competitive spark—going unbeaten, with two wins, in its last five games.

The team is 2-0-3 in the early stages of its fall campaign, a strong separation from its season last year, when the team only won three games while dropping 11 with two ties.

Once last season came to a close, nine players graduated from the Lions’ roster. From that point, Assistant Coach Liam McKersie said it was time to bring reinforcements.

“The focus was replenishing but also making things as competitive as possible,” said McKersie, who also serves as the team’s recruitment coordinator. “Bringing as good of a class as possible as far as talent goes and high character players to really help the team culture take the next step.”

Within the offseason, the men’s soccer team added 11 new players to its roster, bringing the total

number of players to 29.

“Twenty-seven is a golden number to us,” said Head Coach Daniel Toulson. “But when we see players who are interested in joining and represent our key values, it’s also hard to say no to that. That’s why the class was a little bit bigger [than usual this year].”

Toulson, formerly an assistant coach, moved into the head coach’s position in 2020, while McKersie joined the coaching staff in 2021 after a spell coaching as a graduate student at Chatham University.

Limited in his recruitment process at Chatham by the COVID-19 pandemic, McKersie said he was excited to build upon the program once he got to Emerson.

“This is the first time I saw a full recruiting cycle,” he said. “I was really learning and making decisions on the fly with the coordinates of Coach Connelly and Coach Toulson.”

Many of the team’s new players come out of prominent national development programs, including MLS Next and the Elite Clubs

National League.

“MLS Next is the most competitive youth soccer league in the United States,” McKersie said. “The players that have come in from those environments, they’re working with really high-level coaches and other high-level players that have helped us hit the ground running.”

It isn’t just about the skill level, but also the character of the player, said McKersie.

From coast to coast—and even from across the Atlantic, in the case of French native Hugo Berville—the Lions have brought in a class that spans far and wide.

“We really value geographical diversity within the team,” McKersie said. “It’s a way that we can separate ourselves from some other schools. We want to create a team and an identity of different backgrounds and different personalities.”

The team rotates the captain’s armband between five players, Toulson said, valuing a leadership group rather than the traditional

hierarchy and allowing for more players to feel a personal connection to the team.

“They all bring different skill sets, different positions, different mentalities, and that way they reach everyone in the group in a one-on-one type of way,” Toulson said. “The feedback from a lot of the younger guys has been that they really respect our leaders and we can ultimately be successful.”

Although the team features many fresh faces to collegiate soccer, Ethan Fitzsimmons joins the Lions after a year at Saint Michael’s College. The sophomore goalkeeper is from western Massachusetts and made an immediate impact on the team making 14 saves and conceding only two goals. He was also named NEWMAC Defensive Player of the Week on Sept. 6.

Directing his defenders, he uses tactics to limit the quality of shots from his opponents.

“Off the field, I’m reserved, but on the field, I’m one of the loudest,” Fitzsimmons said. “I even lose my voice sometimes after the game because I was shouting so much.”

The team is still forming a solidified starting squad as players battle in practice for a spot on the pitch. Managing the rotation of the team’s

large roster has been important to Toulson.

“The quality from top to bottom is really close,” Tucson said. “It’s a lot higher than in years past which means that training is really competitive.”

“Guys want to get into the starting 11, want to play minutes and they’re good players but some have just a few things that they need to button up on,” he continued. “They’re trying to solve it by working really hard in practice. A lot of guys are getting that, which has been good for team morale.”

Looking towards their season, the Lions will be looking to battle on pitch for a top position in the NEWMAC. However, it isn’t the coaches who have these goals, but the players who want to achieve a more competitive season.

“We as a staff want to be able to empower our players to make a lot of decisions,” McKersie said. “The nature of the game is so fluid on the field. We want to make it pretty player-led on and off the field when setting goals and expectations.”

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Skunks looking forward to upcoming season

Cont. from Pg. 1

Scoreboard Women’s Soccer Sept. 13

Emerson 5 Plymouth St. 1

Women’s Volleyball Sept. 8

Emerson 3 Brandeis 0

Emerson 2 MIT 3

Women’s Tennis Sept. 9

Emerson 6 Gordon 3

Sept. 11

Emerson 0 ColbySwyer 9

Men’s Tennis Sept. 9

Emerson 2 Gordon 7

Cross Country Sept. 10

Men’s 5K 18:59 avg.

Men’s 5K 1:34:59 total

Women’s 5K 25:31 avg.

Women’s 5K 2:07:39 total

Along with growing its numbers, the team is placing a new focus on inclusivity in hopes of diversifying its roster.

“A big goal of ours is increasing the number of people of color and non-men on the team,” said Segal. “We want to have a more diverse presence at the school and keep bringing a more diverse group of people to the sport.”

“We’re working to support those groups,” added co-captain Emma Sawyer, “as well as providing the support systems that are required to serve those groups.”

Turnout at this year’s first practice was high, with 60 people coming to play—more than half of them new to the Skunks. Among those new faces was sophomore marketing communications major Anthony Hong, who wanted to

join the Skunks last semester but was unable due to scheduling conflicts. Hong said that for him, the reward of playing with the Skunks will be the athletic improvement he sees from practice.

“You have to practice a lot,” Hong said. “[I’m here] to put effort in and get positive results out of it. It’s very enjoyable, the process of training to be better.”

Senior theater education and performance major Jon Luke Lassa—who has been part of the team since his first year at Emerson—said he joined because of the welcoming atmosphere the Skunks provided from day one.

“This was definitely the first big school community that I got to be a part of,” said Lassa. “[The team] said ‘just come to the Boston Common and play catch and see what happens.’ I met like 30 people that first day. It’s crazy how many of those people I still see four or five times a week.”

“I’ve been on the team for four years now,” Lassa continued. “We’ve been to a bunch of different tournaments and have gotten to travel all over the Northeast... it’s been really, really awesome.”

The Skunks believe that now, free of many of the college’s COVID-19 regulations, it will be easier to connect in person and re-form the tight-knit community the team became known for over the past few years.

“It’s our first non-COVID year in two years,” said Leuchs-Curtis. “That’s going to be huge in terms of having a lot more team events and things outside of practice.”

The Skunks stayed connected through the pandemic, but they’ve learned that it’s much easier to build relationships in person and without masks.

“Team bonding is just so much easier when we don’t have as many of those restrictions,” said Sawyer. “[It] just means

that we can do things like go to the dining hall after practice together and really get to know players on the team better.”

At the core of it all, the Skunks have a simple goal to achieve this year—one they achieved during the pandemic and also hope to accomplish again this year.

“We just want to have a fun year,” said Leuchs-Curtis.

The Skunks look forward to building their community and becoming more diverse, and having fun as they kick off their practice schedule. Their next big events will be the Lemony Fresh Fall Classic Tournament, taking place in East Greenwich, Rhode Island on Oct. 9, and the Lobster Pot Ultimate Tournament, which will be held in South Portland, Maine, between Oct. 22 and 23.

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